

Vital Statistics



You might have seen the billboards or heard the advertisements on the radio. A new law took effect September 1st that encourages couples to attend free marriage education classes before taking the plunge. Couples who complete the skills-based course also will pay less for their marriage license.

As a result of HB 2683 and HB 2685 passing during the 80th Texas Legislature, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) expanded its healthy marriage initiative, **Twogether in Texas**, statewide to provide marriage education classes to couples contemplating marriage. The new statewide healthy marriage initiative promotes free marriage education classes that offer couples - both married and those contemplating marriage - the tools they need to manage the challenges inherent in relationships.

Once a couple completes the class, they will receive a certificate that they can take to their county clerk when they apply for their marriage license. The certificate is good for one year and serves as proof that the couple is eligible for the discounted marriage license fee. Over 500 certificates have been issued to Texas couples since September 1st.

Because there is a transition period, we will continue to accept old applications until December 31, 2008. As the VSU is the state repository of only the marriage applications, we suggest you do not send attachments with the application, as they will be destroyed. The applications may be downloaded from our website, www.texasvsu.org.

[illegible]

1234-5678-910211

PROVIDED BY TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
HEALTHY MARRIAGE PROGRAM

Hurricane Ike brought troubles;

Texans responded with kindness and hard work

Many of you have read the headlines and seen the media pictures of the devastation that our gulf coast recently experienced due to Hurricane Ike. But did you think about our partners in the funeral services industry and the impact this storm had on their operations?

The Texas Funeral Directors' Association (TFDA) was a crucial networking link and provided immeasurable help immediately following the storm, led by TFDA's Disaster Team Chairman, David Patterson. The TFDA reported that flooded facilities in the area and power outages for several days were common across many counties as far north as Tyler. The Orange County area was hit hard with the Hollywood Cemetery having about 100 caskets disinterred by the storm. Help came in various ways and was coordinated by Mr. Patterson, Joel Levingston, Wayne Boze of the TFDA, and Texas Funeral Services Commission Executive Director, Chet Robbins. The State Operations Coordination Center provided refrigerated trailers to help with human remains storage in several locations. Broussard's Mortuary in Beaumont had a number of trailers and handled the natural deaths as well as performing embalming services via generator power. In Harris County, operations were based at the Chapel in the Pines Funeral Home and Crematory in Crosby, Texas. The Department of State Health Services also helped coordinate services and is paying for the transportation of the remains of medical evacuees that needed to be relocated.

In a separate report from Nellie Hymel at Broussard's Mortuary, she stated that although all of their facilities received damage, they were able to make adjustments and continue funeral services and service to their families. Ms. Hymel commented on what a wonderful asset the TER system was during this hectic and chaotic time. As opposed to how things worked when Hurricane Rita hit in 2005 and the months it took to get manual death certificates filed, to utilizing the electronic system during this difficult time, Ms. Hymel indicated that the TER system performed effectively and efficiently.

Sincere appreciation is extended all the wonderful volunteers that served our peers, neighbors, and fellow Texans during this crisis!

TER-Death Updates

As of October 1, 2008:

- *1,228 Funeral Homes out of 1,354 are enrolled in TER
- *463 Justices of the Peace out of 731 are enrolled in TER
- *13 Medical Examiner Offices out of 13 are enrolled in TER
- *283 Local Registration Offices out of 400 are enrolled in TER

*5,044 Physicians out of approximately 15,000 are enrolled in TER

*15.7% All electronic records filed in 2008

*40.1% Total number of records drop-to-paper in 2008

To sign up online for TER, go to:
www.texasvsu.org

CROSSROADS:

Creative Collaboration in Transitional Times

54TH ANNUAL TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS CONFERENCE

The Renaissance Austin Hotel, 9721 Arboretum Blvd., Austin, TX (512) 343-2626
December 10 - 12, 2008

Make plans today to attend the Conference hosted by the Texas Vital Statistics Unit and co-sponsored by the Texas Public Health Association. The conference will focus on the cooperative effort required among stakeholders to achieve excellence in Texas vital registration as we transition into the electronic age. We look forward to partnering with you at the Crossroads.

Vital Statistics Annual Conference Registration Form

Please print or type.

Name: _____ Title: _____
Office: _____ E-mail: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Please mark the category that best describes your vital statistics role:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital/birthing center staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Registrar staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Midwife | <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Home staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Clerk staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice of the Peace staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Examiner staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

OPTIONAL:

- ___ I will be attending the VSU tour on Friday, December 12th at ☐ 7:45am – 9:45am or ☐ 10:00am – 12:00pm
- ___ I will be attending the social gathering at The Oasis (free transportation provided, dinner is at your own cost) on Thursday, December 11th at 5:00 pm returning by 9:30 pm. To learn more about The Oasis, an Austin Landmark, visit www.oasis-austin.com.

Pre-registration for the annual conference: \$140. Pre-registration deadline: November 25, 2008. Registration after pre-registration deadline: \$155.

Enclosed is payment of \$ _____ for _____ number of registrations (include a separate form w/each person)

Enclose the registration form along with a check, purchase order or money order payable to the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) and mail to TPHA/Vital Statistics Conference, P.O. Box 201540, Austin, TX 78720-1540. Registration cost prior to November 25th is \$140; after November 25th, registration cost is \$155 for all registrations whether mailed or faxed as well as for on-site registration. Lunch can only be guaranteed for registrations with payments received by November 25th. Please submit proper documentation with registration form when registering with a purchase order; TPHA Tax ID Number is 74-6058233. Credit card payment option is available online at www.texaspha.org and click on co-sponsored events. The registration fee is non-refundable. Returned check fee is \$20, payable by money order. By faxing or mailing this form you are agreeing to pay the registration fee as outlined above within 30 days of the conference.

Questions about conference registration? Contact Terri Pali by phone at (512) 336-2520, by fax at (512) 336-0533 or by email at txpha@aol.com.

Amending a Birth Certificate

Texas law recognizes the importance of accurate information on birth certificates. As such, §191.028 of the Health and Safety Code addresses the rationale and mechanism for completing or correcting a record that is incomplete or proved by satisfactory evidence to be inaccurate.

If an error was made on the original birth certificate, the Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) requires that satisfactory documentation be produced to prove that a mistake was made. If the error on the birth certificate is attributed to the hospital, then the medical records clerk or birth registrar may sign the required affidavit. This can be done in lieu of the parents' signature, but must be notarized. Since the hospital prepared and filed the record, they can correct any demographic item so long as they accept responsibility for the error.

An amendment cannot be filed on a new birth certificate already filed based on adoption or paternity. The certificate will have to be re-filed to correct any information. A legal name change may be filed on a new birth certificate already filed based on adoption or paternity. In addition, a legal name change is required in situations where parents have decided to change their child's first, middle, or last name from the name they placed on their child's birth certificate at the hospital. A certified copy of the court order granting the change is required in order to process the name change amendment.

For additional information and requirements for filing birth amendments, access the following link, www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs.

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Texas Vital Statistics Phone Directory

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help-ter@dshs.state.tx.us
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Periodical Rate
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